

Message Text

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ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 AID-05 IGA-01 SCA-01

VO-03 INSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

SSO-00 NSCE-00 /079 W

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P 171947Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4331

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9002

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, TH, VS

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN SOUTH THAILAND

1. THE FOLLOWING IS COMPILED FROM CONSUL SONGKHLA'S REPORTING ON VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND'S SOUTHERN PROVINCES.

2. NUMBERS AND LOCATIONS; AS OF MAY 16 THERE WERE 740 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THE SONGKHLA CONSULAR DISTRICT. THE TWO LARGEST CONCENTRATIONS OF REFUGEES ARE IN SONGKHLA (525) AND CHUMPHON PROVINCE (180).

3. RTG POLICY TOWARDS REFUGEES: CHALO WANNAPUTI, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (MOI) ISSUED ORDERS MAY 9 THAT CONSTITUTE INSTRUCTIONS TO RTG OFFICIALS ON THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE QUESTION. THESE ORDERS INSTRUCT RTG OFFICIALS TO:

--- SEIZE ANY WEAPONS

--- OFFER HUMANITARIAN AID AS NECESSARY.

--- SEND THE REFUGEES ON WITHIN SEVEN DAYS.

--- IF A REFUGEE ASKS FOR HELP FROM THE USG, INFORM THEM THAT THE USG WILL NOT ASSIST.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF RTG POLICY: THE IMPLEMENTATION
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OF RTG POLICY VARIES WITH THE LOCALE. FOR EXAMPLE,

LOCAL OFFICIALS IN PATTANI PROVINCE SET OVER 350 VIETNAMESE BACK UPON THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ON MAY 11. SOME OF THE BOATS SAILED FOR SONGKHLA WHILE OTHERS HEADED SOUTH FOR MALAYSIA. OFFICIALS IN SONGKHLA PROVINCE, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE NOT IMPLEMENTING MOI INSTRUCTIONS AND ARE KEEPING REFUGEES AT THE SONGKHLA NAVAL STATION.

5. COMPOSITION OF REFUGEES: A CATHOLIC MISSIONARY IN SONGKHLA IDENTIFIED ABOUT 150 OF THE REFUGEES AT THE SONGKHLA NAVAL STATION AS CATHOLICS. OF THESE ABOUT 60 PERCENT ARE MALE, MOSTLY HEADS OF FAMILIES WITHOUT DEPENDENTS. IN MANY OF THESE CASES THE USG AIRLIFT REMOVED THE FAMILIES FROM DANGER AND THE HEAD OF FAMILY WENT BACK TO HIS JOB ASSUMING HE HAD TIME TO CATCH THE LAST FLIGHTS. THE MISSIONARY DELIVERED A LETTER TO THE CONSULATE FROM MAJOR HOANG LIEN, 101 INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION UNIT, FOR ONWARD TRANSMISSION TO HIS WIFE NGUYEN THI LIEN, EVACUATED TO GUAM ON APRIL 25. THERE IS AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF OTHER HIGH RISK REFUGEES AND FORMER USG EMPLOYEES IN THE SONGKHLA CAMP.

6. THE NATIONALIST CHINESE RESPONSE: THE ROC CONSUL GENERAL IN SONGKHLA IS APPARENTLY MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO MOVE SOME 70 REFUGEES WITH RELATIVES IN TAIWAN. HE SAID THAT PERHAPS ANOTHER 70 MIGHT QUALIFY TO GO, BUT HIS BANGKOK EMBASSY HAS NOT ANSWERED HIS INITIAL QUERIES.

7. ATMOSPHERICS: THE LOCAL CATHOLIC PRIEST IN SONGKHLA DESCRIBED THE MORALE IN THE CAMP AS STILL GOOD BUT THAT PEOPLE WERE BEGINNING TO FEAR THAT THE RTG WOULD SEND THEM BACK TO VIETNAM. CONSUL SONGKHLA IS FORWARDING PETITIONS FROM VIETNAMESE WHO REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT ASSIST THEM IN THEIR HOUR OF NEED. WHITEHOUSE

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